

REMARKS

Claims 1-10, 12-17, 20, and 21 are pending in this application, claim 19 having been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer and claims 20 and 21 having been added.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate features of now cancelled claim 19. New claim 20 is directed to the subject matter of claim 5, as previously presented, but has been presented in independent format. New claim 21 depends from claim 20, and is supported in the specification at, for example, page 4, lines 23-24. Applicant respectfully requests approval and entry of the amendments.

Claims 1-10, 12-17, and 19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,802,416 to Cazalis in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,997,399 to Szatmary.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

The present invention as set forth in newly amended claim 1 relates to a barrier means comprising a flexible material having a lower edge that is open or “untethered.” The elegant simplicity of the invention has led to dust exposure levels as low as $10 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. This represents a significant improvement over conventional downflow powder handling booths that produce exposure levels of 400 to $1000 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ without compromising maneuverability.

Cazalis discloses an enclosure barrier (denoted by numeral 1) that is airtight and permanent, *i.e.*, the barrier defines a fixed internal volume bounded by continuous walls with no open (or “untethered”) edges. Further, the lower portion of Cazalis’ barrier is not made of a flexible material and does not comprise an untethered lower edge of flexible material. Szatmary discloses a barrier (denoted by numeral 48) that is described as a window. The window is essentially airtight and has not open, “untethered” edges.


Accordingly, neither of the applied patents discloses or reasonably suggests a barrier means comprising flexible material with a lower edge that is untethered. Applicant respectfully submits that a *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been established, and that the Section 103(a) of claim 1 should therefore be withdrawn.

Applicant respectfully submits that because claims 2-10 and 12-17 depend from claim 1 and include all of the distinguishing features thereof, the Section 103(a) rejection of these dependent claims also should be withdrawn.

With regard to new claim 20, neither Cazalis nor Szatamary disclose a curtain-type screen barrier. Finally, new claim 21 depends from claim 20 and includes all of the distinguishing features thereof. As such, Applicant respectfully submits that new claims 20 and 21 are allowable.

If, after reviewing the above amendments and remarks, the Examiner has any questions, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned, by telephone, to schedule an interview to address such issues.

Respectfully submitted,



David S. Taylor
Reg. No. 39,045

LINIAK, BERENATO & WHITE
6550 Rock Spring Drive
Suite 240
Bethesda, Maryland 20817
Telephone: (301) 896-0600
Facsimile: (301) 896-0607